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CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method in a multi-partitioned data processing system for managing operating systems, the method comprising:

receiving a request from an operating system in the multi-partitioned data processing system to register for access to hardware in the multi-partitioned data processing system, wherein the request includes a key code for the operating system;

responsive to receiving the request, determining whether the operating system is an authorized operating system using the key code; and

registering the operating system if the operating system is the authorized operating system.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

terminating the operating system if the operating system is an unauthorized operating system.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining step includes:

comparing the key code to a set of key codes for authorized operating systems; and

determining whether a match is present between the key code and any key code in the set of key codes.

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4. The method of claim 3, wherein the set of key codes is located in a partition profile.
5. The method of claim 3, wherein the set of key codes are defined through a hardware management console.
6. The method of claim 4, wherein the partition profile is stored in a nonvolatile memory.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the key code for the operating system is embedded within the operating system and is a unique key code.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the receiving step, the determining step, and the registering step are performed in platform firmware.
9. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
 - responsive to receiving a call to access hardware, determining whether the operating system is registered;
 - responsive to receiving the call to access the hardware, determining whether the call is necessary to setup the operating system; and
 - terminating the operating system if the operating system is not registered and if the call is unnecessary to setup the operating system.
10. A data processing system for managing operating systems, the data processing system comprising:

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receiving means for receiving a request from an operating system in the multi-partitioned data processing system to register for access to hardware in the multi-partitioned data processing system, wherein the request includes a key code for the operating system;

determining means, responsive to receiving the request, for determining whether the operating system is an authorized operating system using the key code; and

registering means for registering the operating system if the operating system is the authorized operating system.

11. The data processing system of claim 10 further comprising:

terminating means for terminating the operating system if the operating system is an unauthorized operating system.

12. The data processing system of claim 10, wherein the determining step includes:

comparing means for comparing the key code to a set of key codes for authorized operating systems; and

means for determining whether a match is present between the key code and any key code in the set of key codes.

13. The data processing system of claim 12, wherein the set of key codes is located in a partition profile.

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14. The data processing system of claim 12, wherein the set of key codes are defined through a hardware management console.

15. The data processing system of claim 13, wherein the partition profile is stored in a nonvolatile memory.

16. The data processing system of claim 10, wherein the key code for the operating system is embedded within the operating system and is a unique key code.

17. The data processing system of claim 10, wherein the receiving means, the determining step, and the registering step are performed in platform firmware.

18. The data processing system of claim 10, wherein determining means is the first determining means and further comprising:

second determining means, responsive to receiving a call to access hardware, for determining whether the operating system is registered;

third determining means, responsive to receiving the call to access the hardware, for determining whether the call is necessary to setup the operating system; and

terminating means for terminating the operating system if the operating system is not registered and if the call is unnecessary to setup the operating system.

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19. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for managing operating systems, the computer program product comprising:

first instructions for receiving a request from an operating system in the multi-partitioned data processing system to register for access to hardware in the multi-partitioned data processing system, wherein the request includes a key code for the operating system;

second instructions, responsive to receiving the request, for determining whether the operating system is an authorized operating system using the key code; and

third instructions for registering the operating system if the operating system is the authorized operating system.

20. The computer program product of claim 19 further comprising:

fourth instructions for terminating the operating system if the operating system is an unauthorized operating system.

21. The computer program product of claim 19, wherein the second instructions includes:

first sub-instructions for comparing the key code to a set of key codes for authorized operating systems; and

second sub-instructions for determining whether a match is present between the key code and any key code in the set of key codes.

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22. The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the set of key codes is located in a partition profile.

23. The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the set of key codes are defined through a hardware management console.

24. The computer program product of claim 22, wherein the partition profile is stored in a nonvolatile memory.

25. The computer program product of claim 19, wherein the key code for the operating system is embedded within the operating system and is a unique key code.

26. The computer program product of claim 19, wherein the first instructions, the determining step, and the registering step are performed in platform firmware.

27. The computer program product of claim 19 further comprising:

fourth instructions, responsive to receiving a call to access hardware, for determining whether the operating system is registered;

fifth instructions, responsive to receiving the call to access the hardware, for determining whether the call is necessary to setup the operating system; and

sixth instructions for terminating the operating system if the operating system is not registered and if the call is unnecessary to setup the operating system.